



Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

WINTER 2011

ISSUE 45, DECEMBER 2011

WRNC's 10th Annual Symposium - Jan 27-29, 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">General Sessions</p> <p>Professionalism in Wildlife Education Squirrel Ailments Reneesting; Putting Baby Back Enrichment: Every Animal Deserves a Toy Education Permits Introduction to Fawn Rehab (in NC) Caring for Education Animals Raptor Natural History Avian Vision - What Do Birds See? And more....</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Veterinary CE Credit</p> <p>Soft Tissue Wound Management Permits and Laws Wildlife Ophthalmology Physical Therapy in Raptors Wildlife Cardiology Mycoplasmosis in Wild Birds Avian & Reptile Radiology Triage Considerations in Disasters Humane and Timely Euthanasia Raptor Orthopedics....</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Keynote Presentation - Dr. Javier Benito 'Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Spain'</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Hands- On Labs</p> <p>Mammal Physical Exam Sub-q Fluid Therapy Avian Physical Exam Wildlife Parasitology Mammal Bandaging/Splinting Songbird Emergencies – Triage to Transport Feather Imping Mammal Necropsy...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Beginner Track</p> <p>Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation Rehabilitation of Eastern Gray Squirrels Rehabilitation of Virginia Opossums Handling Wildlife Calls Fluid Therapy & Emaciation Protocols Record Keeping Rehabilitation of Eastern Cottontails Zoonosis...</p>

WRNC invites rehabilitators and associated wildlife professionals to attend its 10th annual symposium in Raleigh, NC on January 27-29, 2012. There are more than forty sessions scheduled. In addition to general sessions appropriate for all rehabilitators, there are sessions designed for beginning rehabilitators and sessions approved for veterinary and veterinary technician Continuing Education credit. As always all sessions are open to everyone.

Your symposium registration fee covers the Icebreaker Friday evening, banquet Saturday evening, lunch both days, attendance at the lectures, AND your membership in WRNC for 2012. There is an additional \$5 fee for each of the hands-on labs, which you can select when you register. We have classified the workshops by level to help you make your selection. Seats in workshops are assigned on a first come first serve basis. Register early to insure placement in the workshops of your choice.

Visit the WRNC website to begin registration. After you submit your membership information, you will be linked to the Office of Continuing Education at NCSU's Vet School website to enter your registration and payment information. You may pay by check or credit card.

Please see our symposium page on our website for more information on the sessions, workshops, speakers, events and registration:

<http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/conference/conf2012/conf2012.html>.

This is a quarterly newsletter produced by Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina (WRNC). WRNC was organized in 1999 with a mission to share information and knowledge about wildlife rehabilitation. The opinions, techniques, and recommendations expressed in the articles of this newsletter are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement by WRNC. All material in the newsletter is copyrighted and should not be used or reproduced without permission from the author.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>WRNC Symposium</i>	1
<i>Imprinting - Part I</i>	2
<i>IWRC Class</i>	3
<i>Beginner Basics</i>	4
<i>Spotlight</i>	5
<i>Trophic Feeding</i>	6
<i>Tools for Training</i>	7
<i>Call of the Wild</i>	7
<i>Tales from the Field</i>	8
<i>Chimney Swift Towers</i>	8
<i>Creature Feature</i>	9
<i>Pearls of Wisdom</i>	9
<i>Announcements</i>	10
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	10



BOARD MEMBERS

- Linda Bergman (President)
- Carla Johnson (Vice President)
- Toni O'Neil (Secretary)
- Linda Woodruff (Treasurer)
- Halley Buckanoff
- Jean Chamberlain
- Nicki Dardinger
- Laurel Degernes, DVM
- Christina Hildreth
- Kathy Lillard
- Leslie Martin, DVM
- Ann Rogers
- David Scott, DVM
- Savannah Trantham
- Mary Weiss
- Veterinary Student Liaisons:
- Adrienne Breaux
- Liz Gettinger
- Angela Zill



Imprinting - Part I

by Jean Chamberlain

The most dreaded word in wildlife rehabilitation may be 'Imprinted.' Rehabilitators are warned not to imprint the babies that they raise, but what does imprint actually mean? How do we avoid imprinting?

In the 1930's, Austrian naturalist Konrad Lorenz discovered that goslings would become attached to him and follow him if he, rather than the parent, was present soon after the goslings hatched. He coined the term imprinting to describe this behavior. It is the behavior where the young identifies and bonds to its parent. Lorenz maintained that it also leads to identifying a mate later in life. This is the traditional view of imprinting.

In Lorenz's view imprinting has three characteristics. It occurs immediately and occurs during a short window of time, called a critical period. Critical period refers to a time when certain development occurs that allows the learning to take place. The third characteristic is that imprinting is irreversible. The German word for imprinting, *pragund*, means stamping in.

Goslings respond to most anything that moves. They even will imprint on a moving white ball. They respond best to the appearance of a goose though. Researchers have done experiments where they controlled the environment to learn the characteristics of stimuli that elicit imprinting. They've learned that goslings are most likely to imprint on objects with certain head and neck features that correspond to geese. Though research has concentrated on the visual stimuli that elicit imprinting, it's worth noting that auditory and tactile stimuli also play a role. In geese, imprinting actually begins before hatching as the chick hears the mother while still in the egg.

You may have noticed that I said the goose 'learned' to recognize its parent. Some behaviors are instinctive. The sucking behavior of squirrels and the foraging of birds are examples. Others are learned (humans driving a car). Imprinting is learned behavior but it is a good example of learning that depends largely on an instinctive component. The gosling is pre-programmed to search for and recognize a particular profile. It has the capability to learn and bond to an object (normally the adult) that fits that profile.

It is easy to understand why imprinting is advantageous for geese. They are precocial. They leave the nest soon after hatching. Rapid identification of the parent is necessary for survival. Imprinting insures that the gosling will quickly recognize its parent and will stay with its family group. Other species that imprint like geese include ducks, storks, pelicans, and turkeys.

There is more than one kind of imprinting. Two kinds that apply in the case of goslings are filial and sexual imprinting. Filial imprinting is the type that has received the most attention from researchers and rehabilitators. It is the process of learning the characteristics of the species. It is recognizing and following parents. Sexual imprinting is the process of learning the characteristics of a desirable mate.

How imprinting occurs is a question that interests researchers. What goes on in the brain of the gosling during imprinting? One researcher, Huffman, theorizes that seeing an object that fits the preprogrammed profile produces comfort and pleasure by stimulating certain chemicals, endorphins, in the brain. The gosling associates comfort with the parent. Huffman further theorizes that the critical period is the period prior to the onset of fear of novelty. (Rehabilitators can attest that the very young of many species do not exhibit fear in their presence.) During the critical period the gosling is comforted by the parent. The parent becomes familiar. After the window closes, unfamiliar objects elicit fear making imprinting difficult.

What does all this mean for rehabilitators? In the case of geese we should be compelled to return a separated gosling to its parent immediately if at all possible. We have seen that this is critical if the gosling is very young, particularly during the first day after hatching. If this is not possible, we should find a foster family group in the wild with chicks about the same age. It is well known among rehabilitators that adult geese will accept foster young. If a wild foster parent can't be found, the gosling should immediately be placed with other goslings in captivity in the presence of an adult. Transfer it to another rehabilitator that has the species if necessary.

Do other birds imprint? What are other types of imprinting? Are there comparable forms of bonding in mammals? We will explore these questions in parts 2 and 3 of this series.

References:

Cardoso, SH and Sabbatini, RME. [Learning who is your mother. The behavior of imprinting.](#) Brain & Mind Magazine.
Howard S. Hoffman (1996) [Amorous Turkeys and Addicted Ducklings - The Science of Social Bonding and Imprinting.](#)

IWRC 2011, Asheboro, NC

by Nicki Dardinger

In October, the North Carolina Zoo hosted The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council's Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course. Students and rehabilitators – both current and prospective – attended this two day workshop, which provided core knowledge and skills necessary to successfully provide care to injured and orphaned wildlife. Topics included nutrition, housing standards, zoonoses, and drug dosage calculations – just to name a few. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to gain hands-on experiences with physical exams, injections, tube-feeding, and limb immobilization.

WRNC Board Member, Halley Buckanoff, taught the course alongside Lisa Tretiak from Prairie Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Manitoba, Canada. These two professional rehabilitators presented a highly engaging class, and their stories from the field helped the class understand the value and importance of the material being taught. WRNC Board Members Jean Chamberlain and Carla Johnson assisted with the hands-on sessions, and NC Zoo Senior Veterinarian, Ryan DeVoe, gave a presentation about attending veterinary school to interested attendees.

This class is vital for wildlife rehabilitators. Whether you are new to the field, or have years of experience – this class provides critical, up-to-date skills and information regarding wildlife care. Wildlife rehabilitators have chosen to work in a field that is always changing. As scientists, veterinarians, and rehabilitators continue to learn and develop best practices – the methods for wildlife rehabilitation- including nutrition, housing, medical care, and drug treatments are constantly updated and perfected to ensure that injured and orphaned wildlife receive the best possible care. As wildlife rehabilitators, we have an obligation to stay current on new techniques and continuously learn. The phrase 'But this is the way I've always done it,' isn't good enough for our work. We must be willing to attend conferences, network with other rehabilitators, scan listserves, read wildlife-related research, and take classes to improve our skills. The IWRC Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation class is just one way to improve the care of NC wildlife. Visit their website for other course offerings: www.theiwrc.org. And of course, be sure to attend the upcoming WRNC Symposium and participate in lectures and hands-on labs, as well as network with rehabilitators from across the state!!



Students Practice Proper Techniques for Gavage (Tube) Feeding
Photo Courtesy: Carla Johnson



Avian Wing Wrap Station
Photo Courtesy: Carla Johnson



Class participants learn to give injections to birds and mammals.
Photo Courtesy: Carla Johnson



Beginner Basics—Stay Healthy!!!

by Jean Chamberlain

What are zoonoses?

Zoonoses are diseases transmitted to people from animals (pets and wildlife). The diseases are caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites.

Why are we concerned about zoonoses?

Wildlife rehabilitators come in contact with wildlife that are injured, orphaned, weak, sick and/or sometimes near death. We see a wide range of animals that can carry many zoonotic diseases. We need to know ways to protect ourselves from catching these diseases.

How are these diseases transmitted?

Direct contact with an infected animal - touching wounds, infections, blood, feces or saliva is dangerous. We can also catch diseases by touching surfaces the animal's bedding and/or feeding utensils have touched. Wear gloves when handling animals and when cleaning. Never put animals up against your body and/or under your clothes even to provide heat for hypothermic critters.

Bites from infected animals or insects is another route of transmission. Rabies is one example. We can also get the disease from saliva if it contacts our mucous membranes or any place where the skin is broken. Plague is transmitted through a bite either from an infected rodent or infected fleas. Lyme disease is transmitted through a tick bite. Use flea and tick control anti-parasitics.

Inhalation is yet another route of transmission - beware when an animal sneezes, coughs or sprays. We are close, and therefore particularly vulnerable, when we hand feed or tube feed an animal. Keep animals away from your face. Ornithosis, can be caught by inhaling fecal dust particles. Don't allow poop to accumulate in cages. Frequently remove and dispose of the paper or other materials used under cages to catch eliminations. Don't shake out soiled towels or papers. Aspergillosis, a fungal disease, is spread by inhalation of spores. Do not allow grain or foods to become moldy. Keep in mind that if you have wildlife in one room of your home, the air there is circulating through other rooms of the house.

Diseases are also transmitted by the fecal/oral route (from hand to mouth). Children are warned not to touch turtles as they can get salmonellosis from them. We can too. Wear gloves and be careful when examining the mouth, vent or anal area of an animal and clean up well afterward. Don't eat or drink while handling wildlife.

What can we do to reduce risk?

Protect yourself, your pets, and your family by maintaining a clean environment. Wear gloves when handling animals, their food, feeding implements/dishes and when cleaning cages. Don't wash wildlife supplies in your kitchen sink where you prepare your family food. Wash soiled towels and bedding separate from the home laundry. Consider wearing a gown, lab coat or different clothing and footwear when working with animals. Handle animals with care. Avoid being bitten, scratched and pecked. Keep pets away from the wildlife in your care. Never let children or family pets play in pens, cages or areas where wildlife has been housed. Become knowledgeable about the species you care for, familiar with the symptoms of the diseases that they are most susceptible to and aware of the conditions that facilitate the spread of these diseases. Be vigilant. Watch for disease. Be up to date on the latest outbreaks in your area.

Take a look at your habits. You may find things that you've been doing that should be changed. Follow good sanitation and husbandry practices to protect yourself from zoonotic disease.

Experienced rehabilitators lead by example - Teach the best and safest practices to aspiring beginner rehabilitators; don't pass on bad habits that were accepted in the past. Mentor new rehabilitators to wear gloves when handling wildlife; don't suggest warming an animal next to your body, or holding animals up to your face. Emphasize the importance of washing your hands and maintaining a hygienic environment. Insist that no one eat or drink when working with wildlife. Wear gloves whenever you hold an animal for a photo; make sure the photos you post on websites, social media sites, and those used in training materials show the best, most up-to-date practices

Set a good example. Teach beginners ways to stay healthy and safe!

Risky Practices:

1. Kissing Wildlife or having them up against your face/body.



Creative Commons License:
D. Sharon Pruitt

2. Not Wearing Gloves



Creative Commons License:
Vicky TGAW

3. Pets with Wildlife



Creative Commons License:
SuperTech

Spotlight— Highlighting Rehabilitators in Our State.

David Jasper, Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) Newport, NC

How did you get started in Wildlife Rehabilitation?

In El Paso, Texas there was an ad in the paper looking for volunteers at the wildlife shelter. I volunteered because I got tired of watching animals die and not knowing how to help. I took my Basic Wildlife Rehab Course at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The name of the group I volunteered with was the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue. Most of the rescues there were birds, turtles and once in a while a small mammal. While there, I assisted Josie Karam for two seasons to instruct new volunteers. When I retired and came home to North Carolina, I put in for my wildlife permit and NC permitted me for small mammals. I took a refresher course and the fawn rehabbing course that NCSU offered over a weekend in Raleigh. After that course, I was permitted for fawns in NC as well as small mammals. While taking that course, I met some of the people from the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) in Carteret County and told them I'd put in my application to volunteer there several months before. Shortly afterward, they called me to volunteer with them.



How long have you been rehabilitating?

I volunteered with the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue for 3 years and I've been volunteering with OWLS for approximately 3 years, for a total of at least six years as a certified rehabber

Who is/was your mentor or someone you admire in the field?

I have learned a great deal from Josie Karam of the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue in El Paso, also Herta Henderson, Maria Rush who are staff personnel at OWLS and from Danny Nicely who is another volunteer, who specializes in fawn rehab, at OWLS.

What animals do you work with and which do you enjoy working with the most?

Here in NC, I work mainly with fawns, squirrels, cottontails, opossums, raptors, water fowl, songbirds and reptiles. I like the opossums best because even though they are nasty, they don't turn around and try to bite the hand that feeds them.

Do you have a favorite rehabilitation experience?

Injured and baby animals are fragile. Keeping a fawn healthy enough to turn it over to a primary and then seeing it released to the wild is the most rewarding experience for me.

Do you have any pets; any non-animal family members?

My wife and I have two chihuahuas who are definitely spoiled children who run our house; only my wife, Anne.

What are your other hobbies?

Darts (I'm in a Dart League), golf and fishing are other things I do in my retirement besides animal rehabbing. I am also a member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud of:

I worked for Raytheon for 40 years. Raytheon is a company that specializes in defense and homeland security. I worked in air-defense missile systems.

What do you like about being a part of WRNC?

I find my association with WRNC rewarding for the shared common interests and experiences with the other members of the group who are also wildlife rehabilitators.

Where do you think the greatest need for improvement lies within the Wildlife Rehabilitation Community?

Educating John Q. Public to use a little common sense when bringing in or asking wildlife rehabilitators to come get animals they believe are injured or lost.



Trophic Feeding Categories - Omnivores

by Elizabeth Hannrahan

Crows, Jays, and Grackles are opportunistic foragers in all food groups. They require high quality protein, especially when growing, breeding and molting. They also require at least a 2:1 C:P ratio; metabolic bone disease is common in improperly raised corvids and grackles.

Natural diets are composed of 70% plant material and 30% insects and vertebrates and include insects, invertebrates, carrion, small vertebrates, bird eggs, seeds, fruit and nuts. Young are fed mostly insects.

Most of these species will eat some soaked high-protein kitten kibble (read labels and choose one that has chicken as the first ingredient and chicken by-products as the second ingredient). Provide crumbled hard-boiled egg with the shell, chopped fruit, peanut butter mix, and chopped veggies.

Feed nestling grackles and corvids a 50%-50% diet of hand feeding formula (such as FoNS) and feeder insects. Insect exoskeleton is chitin and provides carbohydrates. Without the chitin from the insects these birds will quickly develop diarrhea. Provide juvenile crows with a chopped mouse. Jays must have secure perches for opening seeds and nuts. Juveniles of all these omnivorous species need stimulation from new foods and enrichment to develop independence.

House crows only with other crows; they will prey on smaller species and larger birds will harass them. Provide a wide variety of foods and enrichment as they get bored easily and many of the foraging behaviors are learned. Do not house grackles with smaller birds.

When transitioning emaciated omnivores to whole food diets mix Pancreatin with a Hill's Prescription A/D®.



References:

Abate, Ardi, Editor. *Thoughts for Food. A step-by-step manual for providing healthy, nutritious and varied live food to insectivorous reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and other creatures.* (Chameleon Information Network, San Diego, CA, 2000).

Ehrlich, Paul R; Dobkin, Davis S.; Wheye, Darryl. *The Birder's Handbook*, (Simon & Shuster New York, NY, 1988).

Finke, Mark; Winn, Diane. "Insects and Related Arthropods; A Nutritional Primer for Rehabilitators". *IWRC Journal of Wildlife Rehabilitation*, Vol. 27, Numbers 3-4, Pages 14-27 (2004).

Hoggard, DVM, Cheryl. "Topics in Wildlife Medicine- Emergency and Critical Care. Nutritional Considerations for Critical Wildlife Patients". (National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. St. Cloud, MN, 2007).

Martin, A.C.; Zim, H.S.; Nelson, A.L. *American Wildlife & Plants A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits.* (Dover Publications, Inc., New York, NY, 1961).

Miller, E. A., editor. *Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, 3rd edition.* (National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, St. Cloud, MN, 2000).

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide To Bird Life and Behavior* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, 2001).



Tools for Training - "Labels"

by **Nicki Dardinger**

How many times have you heard a volunteer or staff member (or maybe even YOU!) say, "I can't work with that bird – he is too aggressive." "The education barred owl is terrified of people." Or perhaps, "The American kestrel is moody, and when she is in one of her moods, she can't be handled." "That black vulture is mischievous...we can't count on him to perform his behaviors." The problem with all of these descriptions is that they are simply labels, and they don't help trainers and caretakers address the behavioral challenges they are facing with the animals in their care. When working with wildlife in captivity, it is important to re-think how we describe animal behaviors. Instead of, "The animal is aggressive," be specific about the particular behaviors that the animal is exhibiting. A better description might be, "When a handler enters the bird's enclosure, he flies at the handler's head." Or, "When putting equipment on the hawk, he bites at handlers' fingers." By identifying the behaviors being displayed, trainers can then put a training plan in place to reduce unwanted behaviors and increase the behaviors that they want animals to display.

"The owl is terrified of people." Well, okay. But can you make any adjustments to this bird's daily experience if this is all you know? Instead, encourage people to identify the behaviors – and even more importantly, to be observant about what happens just before a behavior to try and pinpoint why the animal is exhibiting unwanted behaviors. Again, the first step is to identify the behaviors. Perhaps the owl jumps to the floor of the enclosure when people enter its enclosure, or perhaps the owl flies away from a handler that approaches too quickly. Once the behaviors have been identified, a plan can be put in place to provide positive reinforcements for desired behaviors. Or perhaps handlers who may need to change how they interact with this owl – perhaps they need to move more slowly or not look directly at the bird during their approach.

"The kestrel is moody." As a trainer, I wouldn't even know where to begin if this was the only information given to me. I would need to ask what behavior is the kestrel exhibiting that causes you to label her moody? Do these behaviors occur all of the time or only during certain seasons? Does the kestrel exhibit these behaviors with all handlers, or just certain individuals? What takes place before she exhibits these behaviors? By pinpointing the actual behavior(s), a training plan – or perhaps a new handling protocol – can be put in place.

Finally remember that as a trainer, you are responsible for an animal's 'good' behaviors AND their unwanted behaviors. While a black vulture may act 'mischievous,' if the behaviors the bird is exhibiting are unwanted, then as the trainer, you must take steps to redirect the behavior into something you DO want them to display. We take on a great deal of responsibility when training animals, and we must be willing to celebrate our animals' accomplishments and also accept our mistakes and be willing to put new training plans in place to ensure that our animals are successful in their roles as education ambassadors.

For those of you who are interested in training birds, I highly encourage you to visit Dr. Susan Friedman's website: www.behaviorworks.org. Dr. Friedman is a professor at Utah State University, and has published numerous articles on animal training (many of which can be accessed on her website). Much of her work has been in the context of parrots – although the concepts can be translated across a variety of animals.

For more information on animal training, or if you have a training challenge you would like to see addressed in this feature, please email Nicki.Dardinger@gmail.com

Call of the Wild - Handling Wildlife Calls

by **Stephanie Hansen**

Fall means hunting season. Hunting season means guns. This isn't a danger only to humans but to wildlife. Quite a few protected and endangered species are shot accidentally or intentionally each year. Do you know what to do if you get a call about an animal with a gunshot wound?

As with any animal brought into your care, you will want to get as much information about the location and the situation from which the animal came from, including the person who found the animal and any food or medications it has received. This is handy if you have more questions in the future. But, with a gunshot wounded animal this information is critical.

Once you have stabilized the animal you will need to confirm the animal was shot with x-rays. Once it is confirmed you will need to contact your local police department and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife (919-856-4786) to report the situation. They will need contact information about the people that brought in the animal for possible further questioning and/or follow-up.



Tales from the Field - Be Careful!

by Toni O'Neil

I recently had an encounter with an opossum that was admitted for emaciation, parasites, and tail wounds. It had been in care for several weeks and was progressing well. One day a volunteer was getting the opossum out of its enclosure while I was standing nearby to watch. The opossum started to fall as she tried to hold it and I instinctively put out my hand to block its fall; I was not wearing a glove and was unfortunately bitten on my hand. During the confusion the opossum dropped to the ground and escaped.



I thought I had washed the wounds very thoroughly and applied bandages, so I went off to work. About an hour later, I realized that I was continuously scratching and rubbing my injured hand. Looking down, I saw that my hand had swelled up very badly - it didn't even look like my hand, more like a balloon. I took some Advil and treated the wound with topical antibiotics, figuring they'd do the trick. Stupidly, I decided I would just continue to self medicate and keep an eye on the swelling. It took a while, but eventually I was able to slide my wedding band off my soaped-up finger before going to bed that night. That was probably the only smart thing I did that day!

The next morning the swelling in my hand had really gotten much worse, it had become very hot, dark red and now extended well past my wrist; I knew I had a pretty bad infection going on. I was seriously starting to worry that maybe I had waited too long to seek proper medical attention. So at that point I decided I should probably get it checked out, and drove down to the Urgent Care Center in town. From there, I was told I needed to go straight to the nearby Emergency Room.

By now the word had gotten out and many of the hospital staff members were stopping by to see the lady who got bit by an opossum. That generated a lot of questions as to why I had one and why I let one bite me! Everyone wanted to stare at my poor hand and tell me how terrible it looked.

Once in the Emergency Room cubicle, the doctors debated putting me on IV antibiotics and admitting me but they finally decided that I could be sent home with some strong, fast-acting medications. But, they also announced that I would have to undergo the post exposure rabies vaccination series because the animal was not available for rabies testing. I tried to explain that the incidence of rabies in opossums was very low, and that the opossum had seemed normal. They insisted that they didn't want to take any chances, and I had to admit the hand looked pretty bad. The Health Department had been consulted, and they also indicated that I must have the vaccinations, so I really didn't have any choice.

I was given 7 separate shots initially on that first E.R. visit, and then had to come back 3 days later for another single injection. After that, I went back to the E.R. once a week for the next 3 weeks for additional shots. Since I was fairly healthy up to then, I did not have to go back for the 4th week. By then I felt like a pin cushion!



Did I learn anything from all this? You bet! Don't fool around with serious animal bites. Wildlife has no known medical history and their mouths may be loaded with some pretty nasty bacteria. I still wound up in the hospital after attempting to treat and clean the wound myself. I wasted a lot of time sitting around in waiting rooms. And the worst of it all is that I just received the final bill – it cost over \$15,000 for my opossum adventure! Luckily my health insurance paid all but \$4,000 of it. So guess what Santa is paying off for the O'Neil household this Christmas!?!

Chimney Swift Tower Grants -

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Last Call for Chimney Swift Tower Grant Applications - January 5th, 2012 is right around the corner! WRNC offers a \$300.00 grant to assist an individual or group in undertaking the construction of alternate habitat for Chimney Swifts; this grant includes the Paul & Georgean Kyle book, "New Habitat for America's Mysterious Birds (A Construction Guide)". Up to three grants are awarded per year for this valuable conservation project to eligible candidates. Please refer to WRNC's website <http://ncwildliferehab.org> for details of eligibility and application requirements. This program is open to North Carolina residents only, at this time. For further questions feel free to contact the WRNC Chimney Swift Tower Grant Program Coordinator, Linda Bergman, at [910-346-8345](tel:910-346-8345) or lbergman@ec.rr.com. Deadline for submission is January 5th, annually.

Don't miss the opportunity to host Chimney Swifts in your area!!

Photo Courtesy of: Calvin Warden



Creature Feature - Barred Owl (Strix vario)

by Carol Kaczmarek

The scientific name for the Barred Owl comes from the Greek striz for screech and the Latin for variegated which refers to its coloring. Barred Owls are commonly found in North Carolina.

HABITAT AND RANGE. The traditional range of the Barred Owl is the whole area east of the Rocky Mountains but has expanded to include Southwest Canada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and northern California. They inhabit both broadleaf and coniferous forests and woodlands near water. They prefer an area with large trees for nesting but near open country.

DESCRIPTION. A Barred Owl is a medium to large owl with a round head, well developed facial disks, brown eyes, and yellow beak. They have excellent sight and hearing. They have brown horizontal barring on a cream chest which accounts for their name "Barred Owl". They range in size from 16-24 inches in length with a wingspan 38-45 inches. Females are somewhat larger than males and may weigh up to 1 kg.



Photo Courtesy: Halley D Buckanoff.

VOCALIZATIONS. The Barred Owl is a very vocal owl. It uses a variety of calls including hoots, screams, and barks. However it's most common and recognizable call sounds like "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all."

DIET. Barred owls are opportunistic foragers. They hunt by swooping down from a perch, diving while hovering, and even wading in water. Rodents make up most of their diet. They also prey on other small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects. Indigestible parts such as bone, feathers, and fur clump together and are spit up as pellets. They usually hunt at dusk or dark. However, they will sometimes hunt during the day particularly when they have chicks.

REPRODUCTION. Barred Owls prefer a tree with a hollow for a nest. They will also use an abandoned stick nest of other species such as crows, squirrels, and hawks. Since they do not usually migrate, they will protect their nest throughout the year. They will use the same nest for several years. Breeding is usually between March and August. They only have one brood a year. However, if they lose a clutch, they may lay again. The female lays 2-4 white, slightly rough textured eggs that incubate for 28-32 days. They will fledge at about 5-6 weeks. However the chicks are partially dependent on the parents for about 4 months, which is more than most owls.

LONGEVITY. Barred Owl populations in some areas are increasing. Their lifespan is about 10 years in the wild, upwards of 20 years in captivity. Most deaths are due to interaction with humans such as shootings, road kills, and deforestation. Their only natural enemies are Great Horned Owls.

INTERESTING FACTS.

1. Birders may be able to locate a nest by finding a pile of pellets beneath a tree.
2. Barred owls are the only owls in the eastern ranges with brown eyes and no ear tufts.
3. In its northwestern range, they may interbreed with the slightly smaller Spotted Owl. This causes concern as they also compete with the endangered Spotted Owl.

REHABILITATION CONSIDERATIONS. Since Barred Owls usually do not migrate, they often stray near roads when looking for food in the winter and are subject to collisions. Besides wing fractures, eye injuries are common. It is important to evaluate eyesight before release.

Pearls of Wisdom -

by Toni O'Neil

Now that the cold weather is upon us, remember to change out your ceramic/china/glass drinking bowls and waterers for plastic in your outside pre-release cages. This will prevent the water from freezing and cracking the containers, and you won't have to replace them.



Submit, questions, comments, and articles to:
Newsletter Co-Editors:
Nicki Dardinger
nicki.dardinger@gmail.com
Halley Buckanoff
halley.buckanoff@nczoo.org

Calendar of Events

- **11th International Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conference**
January 24th—28th, New Orleans, LA
www.eow2012.org
- **WRNC 2012 Symposium**
January 27th—29th, Raleigh NC
www.ncwildliferehab.org
- **Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association of Massachusetts Conference**
Saturday, February 11th, 2012
www.wraminc.org
- **National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Symposium 2012**
March 13th—17th 2012
Baton Rouge, LA
www.nwrawildlife.org

Visit us on the web at: www.ncwildliferehab.org

Follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/wrnc

Announcements

- **CONGRATULATIONS** - Possumwood Acres Wildlife Sanctuary (Toni O'Neil, Director and Cathy Burns, Program Coordinator) for being runner-up for Jacksonville's Volunteer Organization of the Year for 2011 Golden Rule Award! This program is sponsored by the United Way of Onslow County, NC.
- **WRNC CAGE GRANTS** - One of the benefits of being a WRNC member is being able to take advantage of the grant opportunities offered to its members. There are two Cage Grants that are offered annually, each in the amount of \$300.00, to 2 members who need to build, expand, enlarge, or repair a cage. Winter is a time for revamping, rearranging, and renewing - all in preparation for spring activities. Take the time to look over your outside caging. Is it adequate for your needs? Do you need to expand and enlarge a cage? Do you need to build a brand new one? Does one need to be repaired before being used again? There is detailed information about the requirements and an application form on our web site. Complete the necessary information and email it to Toni O'Neil (oneil9734@yahoo.com) before the deadline of May 1st. It is not too soon to be thinking of getting started and taking care of your outdoor pre-release caging needs.
- **NOMINATIONS** - Nominations are still being accepted for the Board of Directors. Names must be turned in immediately in order for the Nominating Committee to contact the people so that the necessary paperwork will be completed in time prior to the election. Nominees must live in NC, must be an active member of WRNC, and must be willing to actively work for the good of the organization. All but one of the board meetings are held as teleconferences, and the single meeting that requires actual attendance is held during the annual symposium. Send your nominations in to either Toni O'Neil at Oneil9734@yahoo.com or Linda Bergman at Lbergman@ec.rr.com by December 31st.
- **RVS LOG** - Don't forget to log your rabies vector species calls to http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/rvs/call_log.cfm. The more information we have the stronger our case for permitting to care for these animals.
- **WRNC RAFFLE** - The symposium is only weeks away! Start gathering supplies for our annual raffle. Proceeds generated from the raffle go to WRNC Members by providing scholarships to the symposium, cage grants, chimney swift tower grants, etc. If you contributed last year we will be contacting you in the weeks to come to see if we can rely on your generosity for yet another year. Consider putting aside your unwanted/unused items; nothing is too small as items are bundled into themed gift baskets (a hot, big ticket sell each year). Don't be shy!!! Feel free to contact businesses to see if they are willing and able to donate items. Contact Toni O'Neil (oneil9734@yahoo.com) or Kathy Lillard (hobbiedoo@earthlink.net) for more information or if you have raffle items to donate.
- **SYMPOSIUM EXHIBITOR** - Interested in being an exhibiting vendor during the symposium? Would you like to raise funds for your group/facility? This is a great networking opportunity. And the best part is it's FREE!!!! For more information contact Toni O'Neil (oneil9734@yahoo.com) or Kathy Lillard (hoobiedoo@earthlink.net).